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TAGS: **KDEM PGOV ECON NU VE**
SUBJECT: ORTEGA VICTORY CATALYST FOR CHAVEZ IN RAAN

REF: A. MANAGUA 2247

AB. MANAGUA 2441
BC. MANAGUA 00182

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador P. Trivelli for reason 1.4b/d

11. (C) Summary: President Ortega, with backing from his Venezuelan counterpart Chavez, is consolidating power on Nicaragua's resource-rich Atl

12. (SBU) Ten days ago, on the heels of Daniel Ortega's presidential inauguration, the Miskito residents of Puerto Cabezas, the capital of Nicaragua's Peace and Reconciliation - Empty Promises

13. (C) Within days of the Ortega's inauguration, Brooklyn Rivera, the leader of the YATAMA indigenous party - aligned with the Sandinista National Party - Full Court Press

14. (C) Under the rubric of indemnification and support for veterans, the leaders reported that the FSLN has started a concerted campaign under

15. (C) According to the Miskito leaders, Rivera was instrumental in blocking the oil exploration rights of two U.S. companies under the Bolanc Venezuela - Full Court Press

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16. (C) Emphasizing that Ortega cannot deliver on his campaign promises without the help of Chavez, the Miskito leaders believe that Ortega will

17. (C) Since Ortega came to power, residents in the coastal areas of the RAAN have reported seeing an influx of indigenous peoples from Bolivia's Battle for Hearts and Minds - Miskitos are Vulnerable

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18. (C) Coleman proudly pointed out that the Miskitos are one of only a few non-leftist indigenous population in Latin America, but their extreme

19. (SBU) In addition, Orlando Nunez, the director of the newly created "Program for Zero Hunger," recently announced the 2007 plan to provide

110. (C) These leaders expect to see more Cubans and Venezuelans in the RAAN. They commented that the Cubans and Venezuelans are masters of pro

111. (C) In the face of so many sudden changes, lamented the Miskito leaders, the Miskito people are confused and increasingly fearful of what Human Right's Lawsuit - Abandonment Would be Further Blow

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112. (C) The Miskito leaders believe that Ortega will endeavor to halt the lawsuits filed against him and other Sandinista leaders for alleged

113. (C) Comment: CPDH has reported that they and their families have received repeated death threats because of its involvement in the Miskito cases. Thus far, the police have failed to investigate despite specific evidence. Further, CPDH has alleged discrimination by the Supreme Court (CSJ) and the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE). In October, the CSJ refused to certify the testimonies of Miskito witnesses to be used in the IACHR case and the CSE refused to accredit CPDH's electoral observers for the November presidential elections.

End Comment.

ALN Alliance or Independence?

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114. (C) Miskito leaders admitted that their experience with the ALN has been disappointing and they may form their own party for the 2008 municipal elections. On a previous occasion, Coleman admitted to poloff that the ALN had not supported him during a contentious fight for the 3rd deputy slot in the RAAN and he told the Ambassador that the ALN has failed to take action against the growing presence of the FSLN in the RAAN. Coleman stressed that Miskito leaders still prefer an alliance with the ALN, but one that recognizes their indigenous identity.

Fighting Back - Opportunities for Assistance

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115. (C) The Miskito leaders insist that they will continue their struggle to maintain their Miskito identity and to preserve their past, but admitted that they have virtually no resources and cannot compete with the mounting Sandinista campaign. The leaders urged the U.S. to take action before it is too late and stressed that the Miskitos are loyal to the memory of past USG programs and are yearning for any sign of support. Of paramount importance, they pointed out, is organizing and uniting the Miskito communities to re-enforce the importance of democracy and remind them of the Sandinista's past atrocities. Other ideas discussed during the meeting included:

- Creating a war memorial to honor those who died during the Miskito resistance against the Sandinistas in the 1980s

- Offering medical services in Puerto Cabezas and more remote areas of the RAAN. Ambassador suggested using the medical ship (USNS Comfort), or reprogramming a MEDRETE mission to the RAAN.

- Providing basic equipment and technical support to the fishing, agriculture, and livestock sectors using available programs and organizations (AID, CAFTA, NGOs, etc.)

- Funding the few established liberal NGOs in the RAAN (such as FURCA) and assisting in the creation of additional NGOs to support veterans and other influential groups

- Encouraging participation in exchange programs, such as the CASS-Georgetown program and the Wisconsin Partners Program

- Facilitating contact with international organizations, such as the Inter-American and Pan-American Foundations

Comment

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16. (C) Nicaragua's strategically important and vulnerable Atlantic Coast merits our immediate attention and resources to counter-balance the

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